

## ***Appendix G - Description of the Historic Site Resources***

*[Note: This appendix is excerpted from the affected environment section of the environmental assessment prepared in association with the Draft General Management Plan. The information is reprinted here to provide context to the plan, and to serve as a readily available reference source. The reader should bear in mind that the text describes conditions as they existed in 1998.]*

### **OVERVIEW**

The park consists of historic buildings, associated grounds, and interior/exterior furnishings, which provide the visitor with an appreciation of the life and contributions of President Harry S Truman. The focal point of the park is the Truman home at 219 North Delaware Street in Independence. This 14-room, 2½-story Queen Anne structure dates to 1885 with an earlier portion constructed as early as 1867. Harry and Bess Truman lived in the home from the time of their marriage in 1919 to their respective deaths in 1972 and 1982. The home served as the "Summer White House" from 1945 to 1953 and was the home of the extended Wallace family. One of the most distinctive features of the home is that most of the President and First Lady's belongings remain in the home much as they were arranged during their lives. Visitors to the home are provided the unique opportunity to see how the Trumans lived, and to view the home as though the family had "just stepped out for a few minutes."

In the immediate vicinity of the Truman home are two structures which are part of the "Wallace Family Compound" and which have a direct association with the life of Harry S Truman. Behind the Truman home at 601 and 605 West Truman Road are the 1915-16 period homes of two of Bess Truman's brothers, Frank Wallace and George Wallace and their wives. Across the street from the Truman home at 216 North Delaware is the mid-1880s Noland house, home of Harry S Truman's aunt, uncle, and cousins. These three homes and their grounds are an integral part of the historic scene and serve as exterior exhibits that help interpret the Wallace/Truman family story. Their interiors are designated for modern adaptive use as visitor support facilities and for administrative purposes.

The entire Truman Farm property, buildings, and furnishings in Grandview were acquired by donation from the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department in May 1994. Volunteers from the Friends of the Truman Farm Home assisted Jackson County in operating the Truman Farm Home until that time. The unit is located approximately 20 miles from Independence and includes an 1894 farmhouse with approximately 440 period furnishings, approximately five acres of landscaped grounds, and farm-related outbuildings and equipment. The Truman farmhouse contains mostly period furnishings representing the time period of Harry Truman's life on the farm. This small 5-acre parcel is all that remains of the former 600-acre farm that Harry Truman worked as a young man from 1906-1917. Although little remains of the original farm, the current parcel serves as a focal point for understanding the influence the farm years had on Harry Truman's life.



## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The appearance and condition of the park's historic structures, furnishings, and cultural landscapes are an integral part of the Truman story. Preservation and protection of the original materials associated with these cultural resources is essential in order to present accurately the time periods the park represents. Cultural landscapes, especially around the Truman home, also are important in presenting how the Trumans lived; they should closely resemble conditions during the historic time period.

The park's primary cultural resources are the five Truman-related historic buildings, the smaller structures and landscapes associated with them, and the furnishings and other artifacts associated with the Truman family. In combination with interpretive presentations, these cultural resources convey the story of Harry S Truman to the public.

Major cultural resources and their significance as part of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site include the following:

- The Truman home, associated structures and landscape - The Truman home was the residence of the 33rd President of the United States and his immediate family from 1919 to 1982. The home not only commemorates Harry S Truman but also serves as a means of understanding a man who gained our country's highest office. The home, its contents, the carriage house/garage, associated exterior structures (flagpole, fence, etc.), and the landscape, together with the surrounding historic districts, i.e. the federally-designated Harry S Truman Historic District National Historic Landmark (Truman NHL) and the city-designated Harry S Truman Heritage District, provide an opportunity to tell the story of Harry S Truman's home life in Independence. One side of the carriage house/garage houses Truman's 1972 Chrysler Newport automobile, which is exhibited during the spring, summer, and fall months. The other side serves as a maintenance and storage area.
- The cultural landscape around the Truman home is important in presenting how the Trumans lived. While the Truman story associated with 219 North Delaware encompasses a span of many years, a scene of some type must be maintained. The acquisition of a remarkably complete collection of artifacts, all located *in situ*, provides the visitor the opportunity to view a truly authentic scene (in both the interior of the house as well as on the grounds). Thus no alterations will be made to the property other than those necessary for security or preservation purposes. These actions would include such things as the retention of the Bicentennial sign that was not present at the time of Mr. Truman's death, but was in place when the NPS acquired the Truman home in 1983. Any attempt to restore an earlier scene will inevitably result in the loss of some of the authenticity that makes this presidential site unique. The management objective is to retain the property as it was when received directly from Mrs. Truman in 1982; this will be accomplished by following the treatment recommendations provided in the Cultural Landscape Report of 1989.
- The Frank Wallace home, George Wallace home and garage, and landscapes. These were the residences of two of Bess Truman's brothers and their wives. Both homes are considered a





portion of the "Wallace Family Compound" and serve as an important component of the cultural landscape of the Truman home. The homes and the stories connected with the Wallaces play a meaningful role in helping visitors understand the entire Truman family story.

- The Frank Wallace home serves as housing for the park law enforcement ranger.
- The George Wallace home is used as office space for the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services. A one-car garage is located on the south perimeter of the property and currently houses maintenance supplies and tools.
- The Noland home and landscape - This was the residence of Harry S Truman's uncle and aunt, Joseph and Ella Noland and their daughters, Nellie and Ethel. The home and the stories connected with the Nolands play an important role in helping visitors understand the entire Truman family story. It was from this home that Harry S Truman returned a cake plate, which started his courtship of Bess Wallace. Truman often stayed at the home during his frequent trips to Independence from the Grandview farm to see Bess. This structure is not currently used for park operations or support due to poor structural condition and the need to rehabilitate the interior. Planning for the specific use of this building would be addressed in the Long-Range Interpretation Plan, which is one of the needed plans for the national historic site.
- The Truman farm home, associated structures and landscape - A restored farmhouse and 5-acre portion of the former 600-acre farm that Harry S Truman worked on beginning in 1906. Truman managed the farm following the death of his father in 1914 until 1917 when he went off to war. Life on the farm was important in the development of Harry S Truman as a man and ultimately as the 33rd President of the United States. The eleven years he spent on the farm significantly shaped his character. They allowed him to develop associations with other people through the organizations he joined such as the Masons and the Missouri National Guard, and they offered him his first opportunity to become involved in local politics. Also, it was while he was on the farm that he began his courtship of Bess Wallace. During the 1948 election, his experiences as a farmer enabled him to successfully appeal to the Midwestern farm vote. Truman was proud to give his occupation as "farmer."
- Over 50,000 artifacts from the Truman home, Truman farm home, and related buildings are associated with the lives of the Trumans and their extended family. Proper management and storage of these artifacts is an essential part of the cultural resources program. Artifacts from the residences of the Trumans and their extended family are original. Collections from the farm home are primarily period furnishings with few artifacts original to the family on display in the farmhouse. The artifacts are a significant resource for presenting the private life of Truman through their display in the Truman home, farmhouse, exhibits in the park, and at other museums. A Collection Management Plan (CMP) was prepared in 1996 to guide the park in establishing priorities for curatorial work and to guide routine housekeeping and cyclic maintenance of the collection. Approximately 90% of the 50,000 artifacts have been fully cataloged and recorded. Approximately half of these artifacts are stored and maintained





at an off-site storage facility. Most of these artifacts were removed from the basement, storage room, second floor, and attic of the Truman home, and from the carriage house/garage for preservation purposes. The remainder are on display in the Truman home and farmhouse. Furnishings on the first and second floors of the Truman home remain essentially where they were when the NPS acquired the home in 1983.

- There are both identified and unidentified archeological resources present at both the Independence and Grandview units. At the Truman home, limited survey work has been completed.
- The Truman neighborhood - An important cultural resource, though outside of federal ownership, is the neighborhood surrounding the Truman home. The Harry S. Truman Historic District National Historic Landmark (Truman NHL) was created in 1972 with the concurrence of the former President and recognizes his life-long association with the surrounding neighborhood. The neighborhood is the setting which was the physical nucleus of both Harry S Truman's personal and long, influential political life. Truman dearly loved taking walks through his neighborhood during both the presidential and post-presidential years and he maintained many close associations with his neighbors. While still a living neighborhood in which some change is inevitable, National Park Service management advocates the retention of an atmosphere that closely represents the early 1970s through early 1980s time period.

### **Preservation of the Neighborhood Setting for the Truman Home:**

When the Truman NHL was created in 1972, the nomination established a boundary that included over 100 structures that were under private or public ownership. In 1984 the Harry S Truman National Historic Site opened to the public. At the time the park opened, only the Truman home and carriage house were under federal ownership. In 1991, the Noland home and two Wallace homes were acquired and added to the site. No other acquisitions within the Truman NHL are called for. This places over 100 structures under public and private ownership within the boundaries of the landmark.

When established in 1974, the city-designated Heritage District boundaries matched those of the Truman NHL, but the local ordinance excluded churches from the regulations. In 1979, the city expanded the boundaries of the locally designated district to include several blocks beyond the NHL, but continued to exclude church property from the regulations. In 1984, the city removed the exclusion of churches, but reduced the size of the local district to accommodate an institution wishing to expand its facilities and parking, leaving a section of the NHL without city ordinance protection. The city's action reduced the size of the Heritage District and allowed the demolition of several properties within the NHL to proceed. In 1997, the city revised its historic preservation ordinance to strengthen the protection of historic resources. In 1998, an area slightly larger than the 1979 heritage district boundaries, called the Truman Neighborhood, was determined to be an eligible historic district as part of Section 106 review of proposed streetscape improvements immediately adjacent to the NHL. While the city's preservation ordinance has been strengthened, a section of the NHL remains



unprotected by the ordinance. The National Park Service supports the concept of expansion of the local district to encompass the larger "Truman Neighborhood" and supports revising the existing NHL nomination. Such a revision would specify basic elements such as the period of significance and would identify structures that are "contributing" versus "non-contributing."

To understand Truman, one must gain an understanding of the neighborhood that forged his character. Therefore, the preservation of the neighborhood is key in allowing visitors to more completely understand the man.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

The park's natural resources consist primarily of landscaped lawns and gardens associated with residential use. The Grandview Unit consists of a large mowed lawn and vegetation along the perimeter of the property. While natural resources do exist in the form of grass-covered lawns and open areas, trees, ornamental flowers and shrubs, and other types of vegetation, these are dealt with as part of the historic or cultural landscape. Natural resource management concerns include issues such as pest management and soil erosion.

At the Grandview Unit, the only wildlife noted during an on-site survey were avian species: cardinal, robin, mockingbird, goldfinch, common blackbird, crow, English sparrow, and starling. Skunk and opossum are on the site at times. No doubt there are also several species of native rodents and cottontail rabbits. Based on the limited survey, it could be determined that the habitat at this site would not be sufficient, in quality or quantity, to sustain a viable population of any species of concern that one might anticipate finding in this area.

There are no threatened or endangered species in the area nor is there primary farmland present. See appendices for documentation.

## PARK OPERATIONS

The Independence Unit consists of the Truman home, carriage house/garage, George Wallace home, George Wallace garage, Frank Wallace home, Noland home, Visitor Center/Ticket Center, off-site curatorial storage facility and an off-site maintenance facility.

The Grandview Unit consists of the restored farmhouse, garage (former Grandview post office), smokehouse, privy, and chicken house. The Truman farm opened to the public for ranger-guided tours in 1996. The four outbuildings, farm equipment, and other farm-related features are part of the cultural landscape and are considered exterior exhibits only.

The Frank Wallace home has been converted to government-furnished quarters for the park's law enforcement ranger. The George Wallace home has been converted to staff offices and work areas. The basement of the Truman home is currently utilized as a staging area for the interpretation staff providing guided tours of the home. The Noland home will continue as an exterior





exhibit until it can be converted to a proposed visitor services support facility.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding with the city of Independence, the NPS uses the historic Fire Station No.1 at 223 North Main Street, as the park's visitor center/ticket center, and headquarters. The first floor contains an information desk, exhibits, auditorium, rest rooms, and cooperating association sales area. The second floor houses the park's administrative offices. The basement is used by the city of Independence.

An off-site curatorial storage facility is leased for the park by the General Services Administration. The facility currently houses the museum objects removed from the park's historic structures to protect them from unstable environments and to catalog and preserve them. The lease was renewed in 1993 for an additional ten-year period.

Police, emergency medical services, and fire services are provided by the cities of Independence and Grandview. Both units have concurrent law enforcement jurisdiction. The park's commissioned law enforcement ranger is required to live in the Frank Wallace home. The close proximity of this home to other NPS property in Independence provides a federal presence and additional protection for the park, especially after-hours. Intrusion alarm and smoke detection systems are in place in the Truman home and the Truman farmhouse. The curatorial storage facility is equipped with intrusion/fire detection systems and a sprinkler system.

The major portion of the park's maintenance operation is housed in a building leased from GSA one-half mile from park headquarters on Truman Road. A smaller portion of the operation continues from the Truman home carriage house/garage. The George Wallace garage is utilized to store maintenance materials and small equipment. A modern shed has been built to temporarily house the maintenance operation at the Grandview Unit until a more permanent facility can be obtained. All buildings are provided with water, sewer, natural gas, electricity, and telephone service by the cities of Independence and Grandview, or local utility companies. All roads and road signs outside government property are maintained by the Missouri Highway and Transportation Department and the cities of Independence and Grandview.

The Grandview Unit is a recent addition to the historic site. NPS objectives in developing a management plan for this area are to preserve the historic resources, provide visitors with an experience that enhances their understanding of the Truman story, and interpret the farm in a way that conveys the influence of the farm on Truman's life. Plans for the management and development of the site will be guided by research documents including a Historic Resource Study, an archeological overview and assessment, historic structures reports, a long-range interpretation plan and a cultural landscape report. Structures not original to the farm must be evaluated so determinations can be made about retaining or moving these structures.

There are no visitor facilities at the Grandview Unit. Under the current operation, park rangers lead visitors on ticketed tours. Rangers meet, greet, and distribute tickets to visitors from the south porch of the farm home, which causes additional wear and tear to the resource. Introduction to the farm is provided to the public through use of a wayside exhibit, site bulletins, a temporary exhibit panel discussing the Truman family, and through ranger contact. Presently,

little opportunity exists to provide a thorough orientation to the community and farm that Harry Truman called home for so many years. Independence Unit employees staff the Grandview Unit from May through August on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Present operations do not allow for a consistent NPS presence, which lessens the ability of the park to work with the local community and to serve visitors.

Maintenance operations at the Grandview Unit are currently housed in a temporary shed located on the farm grounds, which compromises the historic scene and presents an inaccurate view of the farm to visitors. In order to properly maintain grounds and accomplish work projects, it would be desirable to secure a maintenance facility. Maintenance of the unit requires equipment that cannot be transported safely from Independence to Grandview on a regular basis.

The Grandview Unit is essentially surrounded by commercial and residential development. The public law authorizing the addition of the Truman Farm Home directed the NPS to provide technical and planning assistance to the city of Grandview to help minimize the adverse effects of development and use of adjacent lands on the Truman Farm.

